

# **EXHIBIT B**

# *The Government Is Shut Down. But Not for Fossil Fuels.*

Federal workers who issue permits for oil, gas and mining operations are on the job, along with those working to repeal pollution limits.

---



Listen to this article · 6:30 min [Learn more](#)



**By Lisa Friedman**

Reporting from Washington

Oct. 17, 2025

More than 700,000 federal employees have been sidelined and thousands more are at risk of being fired as the government shutdown drags on.

But the workers responsible for carrying out the president's plans for more fossil fuels and less wind and solar power are still hard at work. Some are approving permits for companies that want to extract metals, coal, oil and gas from public lands and federal waters. Others are rolling back limits on the greenhouse gas emissions that are driving climate change.

On Thursday the Bureau of Land Management approved the expansion of a copper mine on public land in Utah. Earlier this week the Interior Department prepared to open more than 250,000 acres of land in Wyoming and Nebraska to oil drilling, and held a coal lease sale for access to Montana's Powder River Basin. And at the Environmental Protection Agency, employees are finalizing a plan to allow more mercury emissions from coal plants, according to two people familiar with the work underway.

Charlotte Taylor, a spokeswoman for the Interior Department, said the agency was doing what was necessary in light of President Trump's declaration in January of a national energy emergency.

"Work related to permitting, leasing and other essential energy operations is continuing as excepted work to help strengthen the nation's energy security, maintain reliable supplies and protect American consumers from disruption," Ms. Taylor said.

Most experts say that there is no national energy emergency, pointing to record amounts of oil and gas that is being produced in the United States. Electricity demand, however, is on the rise, driven largely by the explosion of data centers as well as population growth and the rise of artificial intelligence applications. At the same time, the Trump administration has been trying to slow or stop the expansion of renewable energy that could add to the nation's electricity supply.

"If this is truly about keeping the lights on, then why suppress the cleanest and cheapest energy that's coming online?" said Alexandra Adams, chief policy advocacy officer for the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group.

The continuation of work on fossil fuel projects during the shutdown is both legal and appropriate, said Rachel Cauley, a spokeswoman for the Office of Management and Budget.

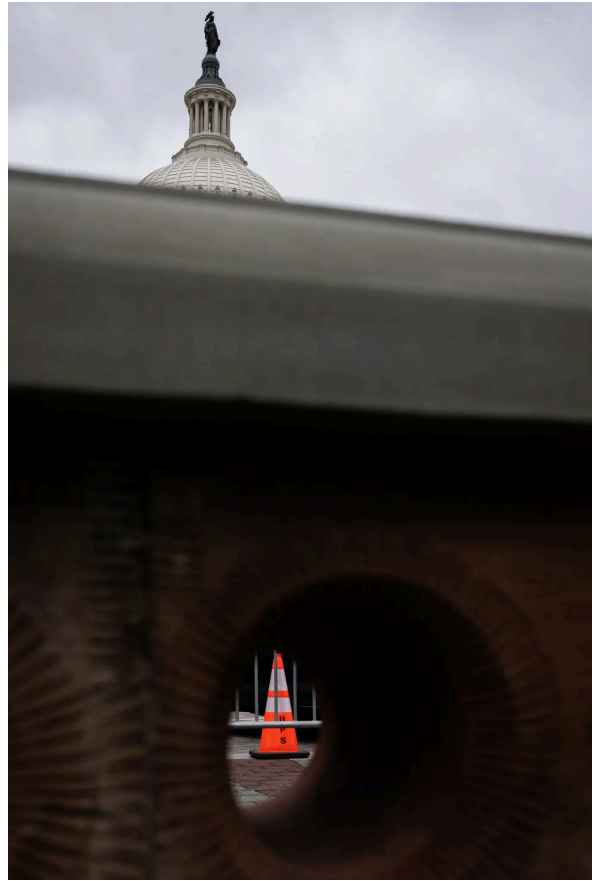
"Approving energy development is no different than keeping open national parks — it can be done to the extent funds are available and at some point money will run out," Ms. Cauley said. She blamed Democrats for the shutdown, which she said has forced Mr. Trump "to pick and choose which programs to fund with the dwindling dollars that remain carried over from last year."

But environmental advocates and others accused the Trump administration of deploying the government shutdown selectively to assist favored industries and political supporters.

Oil and gas industry interests spent nearly \$75 million to help elect Mr. Trump in 2024.



A largely quiet Capitol Hill last week during the government shutdown. Haiyun Jiang/The New York Times



Around 700,000 federal employees are on furlough as the shutdown continues. Haiyun Jiang/The New York Times

Mr. Trump “is showing us exactly who and what matters to him, which is industry executives and his political allies,” said Stephanie Kurose, deputy director of government affairs at the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group.

At the Energy Department, nearly 200 employees were told last week that their jobs were being eliminated. At the same time, department employees approved a plan to improve electric transmission lines across Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Most Environmental Protection Agency employees have been working through the shutdown. Union officials believe the agency has been able to do that by tapping into appropriated funds that have carried over from the previous funding period,

but E.P.A. officials have declined to answer questions about what money they are using or how long it will last.

Employees working on weakening or repealing regulations that the Trump administration has called burdensome to oil, gas and coal companies have been told to press on, according to two E.P.A. officials who asked not to be named because they were not authorized to discuss agency work. One regulation nearing completion would loosen power plant limits on emissions of mercury, a neurotoxin that impairs brain development, the two officials said.

Brigit Hirsch, a spokeswoman for the E.P.A., said in a statement that the agency is continuing to fulfill legal obligations, meet emergency response and work on administration priorities.

“We are unwavering in our commitment to our mission of providing clean air, clean land, and clean water for all Americans,” she said. “Moreover, we’ll continue to dismantle the Biden Administration’s wasteful and costly agenda.”

And the Interior Department has furloughed about half of its 58,600 employees but exempted those who permit fossil fuel and mining projects on public lands and in federal waters. On Thursday it announced it had approved an expansion of the copper mining operations at the Lisbon Valley Copper Mine in San Juan County, Utah.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, which oversees offshore energy development, “will cease all renewable energy activities” during the shutdown, according to a copy of the bureau’s plan. But its plan calls for using carry-over funds to keep employees working on “priority conventional energy projects,” including offshore drilling permits and a five-year plan for selling drilling leases along the outer continental shelf.

Oil industry representatives called the work being done throughout the shutdown critical.

“It’s essential that critical permitting and regulatory functions remain active to avoid unnecessary delays to energy projects that help keep energy affordable, strengthen reliability, and support jobs and government revenue,” said Bethany Williams, a spokeswoman for the American Petroleum Institute, which represents oil companies.



A shovel loads coal into a dump truck at the Spring Creek Mine in southern Montana, operated by the Navajo Transitional Energy Co. Kevin Moloney for The New York Times

Kevin Book, managing director of ClearView Energy Partners, a Washington-based research firm, said the Trump administration’s shutdown agenda was simply “illustrative of different presidential priorities.” The Biden administration’s contingency plans for a government shutdown would have allowed Treasury Department employees to continue working on renewable energy, he noted.

**Lisa Friedman** is a Times reporter who writes about how governments are addressing climate change and the effects of those policies on communities.